



KEEP YOUR FITNESS PROGRAM ON TRACK

Maintaining a healthy weight is integral to good health. When your Body Mass Index (BMI) is in the range recommended by the Surgeon General, you have a lower risk of heart disease, type 2 diabetes, breathing problems and numerous other health problems. And we all know the basic recipe for fitness: a healthy diet and plenty of exercise!

So, if it's that simple, why are over 34 percent¹ of adult Americans obese?

One big reason is that it's not always easy to find and stick to a workout regimen that works for you – and there's nothing more frustrating than cutting your calorie intake, upping your workout time and not seeing any results.

But don't give up! You may just need to change your strategy a bit.

FEEL THE BURN

Take an honest look at your workout regimen. Are you going to the gym to get a workout, or are you there to network in the social scene? Have you fallen into a workout routine without evaluating whether you're ready to take the intensity or number of repetitions up a notch?

To maximize weight loss:

- » Alternate the type of workout you do – include cardiovascular and resistance exercise.
- » Check your heart rate to make sure you're working at the right intensity level (Use an online heart rate calculator to determine your target heart rate or ask your doctor or your gym's qualified fitness staff)

I CAN'T BELIEVE I ATE THE WHOLE THING

Keep a food journal to record everything you eat during the day, and be honest! You may be surprised at how many "handfuls of this" and "nibbles of that" you're actually eating in a day, not to mention the ever-increasing portion sizes served in restaurants. Those calories add up and could be the saboteur of your fitness regimen.

To keep your weight loss on track, remember to:

- » Pay attention to portion sizes.
- » Avoid using food as a reward for good eating habits.
- » Try not to binge on weekends.

TRY A LITTLE RELAXATION

Your mortgage bill is going through the roof, your car needs its transmission replaced and your kid just reminded you of uniform fees due tomorrow; it's no wonder all you want to do is pop open a bag of potato chips and hide under the covers of your bed. But did you know there's actually a physiological reason you're reaching for that bag of starch?

¹ National Center for Health Statistics. New CDC Study Finds No Increase in Obesity Among Adults; But Levels Still High. <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/07newsreleases/obesity.htm> (accessed January 24, 2008).

Recent studies have shown that constant high stress levels increase the production of cortisol in your body. These high levels of cortisol can cause you to crave sugars and carbohydrates and cause you to store extra fat around your mid-section.

If your fitness regimen stalls, evaluate the level of stress in your life. Take a stab at some relaxation exercises like meditation or gentle stretching. Make sure you're doing your best to maintain your health by not skipping meals, getting enough sleep and easing up on smoking and caffeine.

FINAL THOUGHTS

You're alternating weight training and cardio, monitoring your calorie intake and doing daily meditation to keep your stress levels under control, but you're still not seeing any difference on that darn scale.

Don't get frustrated! Stick with your good habits, and keep these thoughts in mind:

- » Make sure that, in addition to monitoring your weight, you're tracking your measurements. Often you'll see your measurements going down even if your weight is not.
- » Take in a healthy number of calories. You can actually hinder your weight loss efforts if your body isn't getting the right number of calories.
- » Avoid overtraining. If you push yourself too hard, your body may actually decrease the number of calories being burned as a defense technique. If you feel tired, have decreased energy, pain in your joints or muscles, headaches, etc., back off your routine for a couple of days and drink lots of fluids.

This article is for informational and self-help purposes only. It should not be treated as a substitute for financial, medical, psychiatric, psychological or behavioral healthcare advice, nor as a substitute for consultation with a qualified professional.

Need some help getting your fitness program back on track? Call your EAP!

Face-to-face and telephonic consultations are available to help you with depression, stress, anxiety and other emotional health and work-life issues.* Call any time for assessment, assistance and referral to additional services.

**Call the number above or your benefits administrator to find out how many counseling sessions you're eligible to receive. Benefits may vary depending on your eligibility and employment type.*

For more information, call
(866) EAP-4SOC
(866) 327-4762
 TDD callers, please dial (800) 327-0801

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